NUMB. CCXXIV.

The SPECTATOR.

—— Fulgente trahit conſtrictos Gloria curru
Non minus ignotos generoſis —— Hor. Sat. 6.

Friday, November 16. 1711.

IF we look abroad upon the great Multitude of Mankind, and endeavour to trace out the Principles of Action in every Individual, it will, I think, ſeem highly probable that Ambition runs through the whole Species, and that every Man in proportion to the Vigour of his Complection is more or leſs actuated by it. It is indeed no uncommon thing to meet with Men, who, by the natural Bent of their Inclinations, and without the Diſcipline of Philoſophy, aſpire not to the Heights of Power and Grandeur; who never ſet their Hearts upon a numerous Train of Clients and Dependancies, nor other gay Appendages of Greatneſs; who are contented with a Competency, and will not moleſt their Tranquility to gain an Abundance: But it is not therefore to be concluded that ſuch a Man is not ambitious; his Deſires may have cut out another Channel, and determin'd him to other Purſuits; the Motive however may be ſtill the ſame; and in theſe Caſes likewiſe the Man may be equally puſhed on with the Deſire of Diſtinction.

Though the pure Conſciouſneſs of worthy Actions, abſtracted from the Views of popular Applauſe, be to a generous Mind an ample Reward, yet the Deſire of Diſtinction was doubtleſs implanted in our Natures as an additional Incentive to exert our ſelves in virtuous Excellence.

This Paſſion indeed, like all others, is frequently perverted to evil and ignoble Purpoſes; ſo that we may account for many of the Excellencies and Follies of Life upon the ſame innate Principle, to wit, the Deſire of being remarkabe: For this as it has been differently cultivated by Education, Study, and Converſe, will bring forth ſuitable Effects as it falls in with an ingenuous Diſpoſition or a corrupt Mind; it does accordingly expreſs it ſelf in Acts of Magnanimity or ſelfiſh Cunning, as it meets with a good or a weak Underſtanding. As it has been employed in embelliſhing the Mind or adorning the Outſide; it renders the Man eminently Praiſe-worthy or ridiculous. Ambition therefore is not to be confined only to one Paſſion or Purſuit; for as the ſame Humours in Conſtitutions otherwiſe different affect the Body after different Manners, ſo the ſame aſpiring Principle within us ſometimes breaks forth upon one Object, ſometimes upon another.

It cannot be doubted but that there is as great a Deſire of Glory in a Ring of Wreſtlers or Cudgel-Players, as in any other more refined Competition for Superiority. No Man that could avoid it, would ever ſuffer his Head to be broken but out of a Principle of Honour; this is the ſecret Spring that puſhes them forward; and the Superiority which they gain above the undiſtinguiſhed Many, does more than repair thoſe Wounds they have received in the Combat. 'Tis Mr. Waller's Opinion, that *Julius Cæſar*, had he not been Maſter of the *Roman* Empire, would in all Probability have made an excellent Wreſtler.

Great Julius *on the Mountains bred,*
A Flock perhaps or Herd had led;
He that the World ſubdued, had been
But the beſt Wreſtler on the Green.

That he ſubdued the World, was owing to the Accidents of Art and Knowledge; had he not met with thoſe Advantages, the ſame Sparks of Emulation would have kindled within him, and prompted him to diſtinguiſh himſelf in ſome Enterprize of a lower Nature. Since therefore no Man's Lot is ſo unalterably fixed in this Life, but that a thouſand Accidents may either forward or diſappoint his Advancement, it is, methinks, a pleaſant and inoffenſive Speculation, to conſider a great Man as diveſted of all the adventitious Circumſtances of Fortune, and to bring him down in one's Imagination to that low Station of Life, the Nature of which bears ſome diſtant Reſemblance to that high one he is at preſent poſſeſſed of. Thus one may view him exerciſing in Miniature thoſe Talents of Nature, which being drawn out by Education to their full Length, enable him for the Diſcharge of ſome important Employment. On the other Hand, one may raiſe uneducated Merit to ſuch a Pitch of Greatneſs, as may ſeem equal to the poſſible Extent of his improved Capacity.

Thus Nature furniſhes a Man with a general Appetite of Glory, Education determines it to this or that particular Object. The Deſire of Diſtinction is not, I think, in any Inſtance more obſervable than in the variety of Out-ſides and new Appearances, which the Modiſh part of the World are oblig'd to provide, in order to make themſelves remarkable; for any thing glaring and particular, either in Behaviour or Apparel, is known to have this good Effect, that it catches the Eye, and will not ſuffer you to paſs over the Perſon ſo adorn'd without due notice and Obſervation. It has likewiſe, upon this Account, been frequently reſented as a very great Slight, to leave any Gentleman out of a Lampoon or Satyr, who has as much right to be there as his Neighbour, becauſe it ſuppoſes the Perſon not eminent enough to be taken notice of. To this paſſionate fondneſs for Diſtinction are owing various frolickſome and irregular Practiſes, as ſallying out into Nocturnal Exploits, breaking of Windows, ſinging of Catches, beating the Watch, getting Drunk twice a Day, killing a great Number of Horſes; with many other Enterprizes of the like fiery Nature: For certainly many a Man is more Rakiſh and Extravagant than he would willingly be, were there not others to look on and give their Approbation.

One very common, and at the ſame time the moſt abſurd Ambition that ever ſhew'd it ſelf in Humane Nature, is that which comes upon a Man with Experience and old Age, the Seaſon when it might be expected he ſhould be wiſeſt; and therefore it cannot receive any of thoſe leſſening Circumſtances which do, in ſon e

measure,

meaſure, excuſe the diſorderly Ferments of youthful Blood: I mean the paſſion for getting Money, excluſive of the Character of the Provident Father, the Affectionate Husband, or the Generous Friend. It may be remarked, for the Comfort of honeſt Poverty, that this Deſire reigns moſt in thoſe who have but few good Qualities to recommend 'em. This is a Weed that will grow in a barren Soil. Humanity, Good Nature, and the Advantages of a Liberal Education, are incompatible with Avarice. 'Tis ſtrange to ſee how ſuddenly this abject Paſſion kills all the noble Sentiments and generous Ambitions that adorn Humane Nature; it renders the Man who is over-run with it a peeviſh and cruel Maſter, a ſevere Parent, an unſociable Husband, a diſtant and miſtruſtful Friend. But it is more to the preſent Purpoſe to conſider it as an abſurd Paſſion of the Heart, rather than as a vicious Affection of the Mind. As there are frequent Inſtances to be met with of a proud Humility, ſo this Paſſion, contrary to moſt others affects Applauſe, by avoiding all Shew and Appearance; for this reaſon it will not ſometimes endure even the common Decencies of Apparel. *A covetous Man will call himſelf poor, that you may ſooth his Vanity by contradicting him.* Love, and the Deſire of Glory, as they are the moſt natural, ſo they are capable of being refined into the moſt delicate and rational Paſſions. 'Tis true, the wiſe Man who ſtrikes out of the ſecret Paths of a private Life for Honour and Dignity, allured by the Splendor of a Court, and the unfelt Weight of publick Employment, whether he ſucceeds in his Attempts or no, uſually comes near enough to this painted Greatneſs to diſcern the Dawbing; he is then deſirous of extricating himſelf out of the Hurry of Life, that he may paſs away the Remainder of his Days in Tranquility and Retirement.

It may be thought then but common Prudence in a Man not to change a better State for a worſe, nor ever to quit that which he knows he ſhall take up again with Pleaſure; and yet if human Life be not a little moved with the gentle Gales of Hopes and Fears, there may be ſome Danger of its ſtagnating in an unmanly Indolence and Security. It is a known Story of *Domitian*, that after he had poſſeſſed himſelf of the *Roman* Empire his Deſires turn'd upon catching Flies. Active and Maſculine Spirits in the Vigour of Youth neither can nor ought to remain at Reſt: If they debar themſelves from aiming at a noble Object, their Deſires will move downwards, and they will feel themſelves actuated by ſome low and abject Paſſion. Thus if you cut off the top Branches of a Tree, and will not ſuffer it to grow any higher, it will not therefore ceaſe to grow, but will quickly ſhoot out at the Bottom. The Man indeed who goes into the World only with the narrow Views of Self-Intereſt, who catches at the Applauſe of an idle Multitude, as he can find no ſolid Contentment at the End of his Journey, ſo he deſerves to meet with Diſappointments in his Way: But he who is actuated by a nobler Principle, whoſe Mind is ſo far enlarged as to take in the Proſpect of his Country's Good, who is enamour'd with that Praiſe which is one of the fair Attendants of Virtue, and values not thoſe Acclamations which are not ſeconded by the impartial Teſtimony of his own Mind; who repines not at the low Station which Providence has at preſent allotted him, but yet would willingly advance himſelf by juſtifiable Means to a more riſing and advantageous Ground; ſuch a Man is warmed with a generous Emulation; it is a virtuous Movement in him to wiſh and to endeavour that his Power of doing Good may be equal to his Will.

The Man who is fitted out by Nature, and ſent into the World with great Abilities, is capable of doing great Good or Miſchief in it. It ought therefore to be the Care of Education to infuſe into the untainted Youth early Notices of Juſtice and Honour, that ſo the poſſible Advantages of good Parts may not take an evil Turn, nor be perverted to baſe and unworthy Purpoſes. It is the Buſineſs of Religion and Philoſophy not ſo much to extinguiſh our Paſſions, as to regulate and direct them to valuable well-choſen Objects: When theſe have pointed out to us which Courſe we may lawfully ſteer, 'tis no Harm to ſet out all our Sail; if the Storms and Tempeſts of Adverſity ſhould riſe upon us, and not ſuffer us to make the Haven where we would be, it will however prove no ſmall Conſolation to us in theſe Circumſtances, that we have neither miſtaken our Courſe, nor fallen into Calamities of our own procuring.

Religion therefore (were we to conſider it no further than as it interpoſes in the Affairs of this Life) is highly valuable, and worthy of great Veneration; as it ſettles the various Pretenſions, and otherwiſe interfering Intereſts of mortal Men, and thereby conſults the Harmony and Order of the great Community; as it gives a Man room to play his Part, and exert his Abilities; as it animates to Actions truly laudable in themſelves, in their Effects beneficial to Society; as it inſpires rational Ambitions, correct Love, and elegant Deſires.

Never acted but thrice.

By Her Majeſty's Company of Comedians,

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, this preſent Friday, being the 16th of November, will be preſented a new Comedy call'd, The Wife's Relief; or, The Husband's Cure. And by her Majeſty's Command no Perſons are to be admitted behind the Scenes.

These are to give Notice, That the Sale of the Cargo of the Ship Oley Brigat is adjourned till Tueſday next, being the 20th Inſtant, at 9 a Clock in the Forenoon, at which Time it will commence at Garraway's Coffee-houſe purſuant to former [illegible]

Note, The Arrack may be again viewed at the reſpective Warehouſes at Botolph-Wharf.

For the Benefit of Mr. Anthony Young, Organiſt of St. Clements-Danes, at Stationer's-hall, on Thurſday the 22d Inſtant being St. Caecilias Day, will be performed a Conſort of Vocal and Inſtrumental Muſick, moſt of which will be entirely new, [illegible] Leveridge ſings that celebrated Song, beginning, At Genius of England. Tickets are to be had at St. James's Coffee-houſe, [illegible] Devereux-Court, John's in Sweething Ally, and at Charles [illegible] at the Corner of Beaufort Buildings in the Strand, at 5 s. [illegible]

This Day is publiſh'd,

Palmyra: Being Poems on ſeveral Subjects, viz. Complaining againſt Time, complaining of Abſence, the [illegible] the Captive, to Palmyra putting her Mask on, on receiving a [illegible] to Palmyra having her Mask on, a Poem preferring Wit and [illegible] before Wealth, Abſence not to be indured, Advice to a young Lady, concerning Marriage. Sold by J. Morphew near Stationers Hall. Price 6 d.

Juſt Publiſh'd,

An Account of the Trade in India: Containing Rules for good Government in Trade, Price Courants, and Tables: With Deſcriptions of Fort St George, Acheen, Malacca, [illegible] Canton, Anjengo, Muskat, Gombroon, Surat, Goa, Carwar, Tellicherry, Panola, Calicut, the Cape of Good Hope, and St. Helena, [illegible] Inhabitants, Cuſtoms, Religion, Government, Animals, [illegible] To which is added, An Account of the Management of the [illegible] in their Affairs in India. By Charles Lockyer. Printed for the Author, and ſold by Samuel Crouch, at the Corner of Popes-head Alley in Cornhill.

Juſt Publiſh'd.

An impartial Enquiry into the Management of the War in Spain by the Miniſtry at home, and into the Conduct of thoſe Generals to whoſe Care the ſame has been committed abroad. Collected from many original Letters and Councils of War never publiſh'd before. Together with an Account of the [illegible] Embarkations, both of Britiſh and Foreign Troops, that have been ſent to Spain or Portugal for the Support of the preſent War, and a Diſtribution of the annual Sums granted by Parliament, and applied to thoſe Services. Sold by J. Morphew near Stationer's Hall.

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the *Strand*.